Mobile phone facility in NER

942. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to introduce mobile phone facility in the North-Eastern Region and Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) by when the BSNL would launch the services; and

(c) how Government propose to ensure security of the areas in the wake of the new facility?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Sir, M/s Reliance Telecom (?) Ltd. who have been issued licences for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) for North East Telecom Circle and Assam Telecom Circle (which two Circle cover the North Eastern Region), are already providing CMTS in Shillong and Guwahati. Expansion as well as fresh start of CMTS, which was barred for sometime in the North Eastern Region and Jammu and Kashmir, was permitted by a Government Order dated 21.8.2002.

(b) BSNL has plans to launch the CMTS in North East Region and Jammu and Kashmir from August, 2003. However, BSNL will make efforts to start service in a few places in Jammu and Kashmir even earlier.

(c) The Cellular Operators are required to provide the monitoring facilities at their switches as prescribed by the Government from time to time.

Telephone Exchanges in A.P.

943. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the BSNL would not take up installation of any new exchanges in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the BSNL proposes to cover some more towns under its Cellular Programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Current cellular programme of BSNL under execution envisages the coverage of 1031 cities in the country. Additional cities will be considered for coverage in future expansion programme depending upon their business viability.

Free internet connection

944. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in some countries like USA, free internet connection is provided to students and senior citizens;

(b) if so, whether Government have any proposal to introduce similar facility in India; and

(c) if not, whether Government would consider it for implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) As per the information provided by ISPAI (Internet Services Providers Associations of India) there is the 'E-rate' programme, established by the bipartisan Snowe-Kerrey amendment to the Telecom Act of 1996 in the USA. It provides 20% to 90% discounts on telecommunications services, internet access and internal connections to schools and public libraries. Besides, most universities and colleges in many countries offer free internet access to students, faculty and staff not only on the campus but also from homes, dormitories and hostels. However, ISPAI are not